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AUGUST WEATHER AND CROPS

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered through station WRC and 43 other associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, September 2, 1931.

From the standpoint of moisture August, this year, in marked contrast to August of last year, was the most favorable month for a long time in nearly all sections of the country from the States bordering on the west bank of the Mississippi River eastward to the Atlantic Ocean. Parts of the Lake region, including principally New York and Michigan, were largely missed by the August rains, and serious drought continued, but in most other sections the amounts tended to above normal and practically all growing crops made good advance. The situation continued especially favorable in the Atlantic States and the upper Ohio Valley where moisture has been mostly ample for all needs.

However, farther west, including most of the Great Plains from western Kansas northward, the North-Central and more northwestern States, rainfall continued very scanty and growing vegetation suffered severely in many places during the month. It was especially dry in much of South Dakota and generally in Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. In Montana, August rainfall was mostly less than one-fourth of the normal, while many places to the westward had practically a rainless month. In most of the South there were good rains, and the far Southwest, especially New Mexico and Arizona, was again highly favored.

The month, as a whole, was nearly normal with regard to temperature, with the monthly means practically everywhere east of the Rocky Mountains ranging from 1 degree or 2 degrees below normal to a like amount above normal. We very seldom have a month as near normal in temperature as August of this year, when the country, as a whole, is considered, but at the same time it was decidedly warm in many places west of the Rocky Mountains. For the country, as a whole, the temperature averaged somewhat above normal, but the latter part brought some cool weather to the North-Central States, with light to heavy frosts reported in a good many exposed places, though without widespread damage. In general, we may say that, when both temperature and rainfall are considered, the weather of August was as near normal as we should expect to find.

Seasonal farm work made satisfactory progress during the month, except for interruption to threshing and some damage to grain in shock by rains in the upper Ohio Valley, principally in Ohio, and it was mostly too dry for plowing in the western and northwestern Winter Wheat Belt. It was favorable for late harvest and threshing in the Northwest and good progress was made in this work. Some winter wheat was seeded near the close of the month in western Kansas, and a few other early seeding sections, but the soil was mostly too dry for seed beds. Pasture lands continued very dry in much of the great western and northwestern grazing areas, and considerable feeding of stock was necessary in some Central-Northern States. Pastures are improving rather generally east of the Mississippi River, except in some dry northern sections.

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With regard to corn, the weather was favorable east of the Mississippi River, except in parts of the Lake region, but in the western and northwestern portions of the main Corn Belt, the month was unfavorably dry. In the Atlantic States the crop continued unusually good advance, while in Ohio, the August rains brought corn to a very satisfactory state of maturity. Indiana was less generally favored, but in most parts of the State corn made satisfactory advance, while in Illinois rainfall was more than ample in the southern sections where July had been harmfully dry, and in other parts rainfall it was sufficient to allow normal development. The moisture in Kentucky and Missouri was favorable, with improvement where the July drought had not been too severe. In lower Michigan, the August damage was mostly heavy, and also in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In Iowa, the crop suffered greatly in the north-central part, with northwestern and northeastern counties but slightly better, and only small areas in the south had normal advancement. Except in northeastern Kansas and eastern Oklahoma, the corn crop in the Plains States was further harmed and practically ruined in many places; South Dakota will produce very little marketable grain, and its condition in Nebraska is mostly poor to very poor.

With regard to cotton August temperatures were seasonable, and in most States rainfall was moderate, except for heavy falls in parts of the Mississippi Valley and some northeastern sections, principally North Carolina. In Texas, the month was fairly favorable for the crop, though there were considerable complaints of dryness in parts of the central and west, while development was poor in most of the southern third of the State. In Oklahoma, advance in general was rather poor because of too much rain in the east which caused shedding and rank growth and favored weevil, and there was a lack of moisture in some central and western districts. In the central States of the belt progress was irregular, with considerable complaints of unsatisfactory fruiting and of shedding in the wetter sections, while in the eastern belt conditions were mostly favorable, except for too much rain in parts of the north. The more favorable weather in Georgia resulted in generally good progress. Reports are rather general of slowness in picking, partly because of economic conditions.